

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5432

As Reported by House Committee On:
Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks

Title: An act relating to the oil spill advisory council.

Brief Description: Creating the oil spill advisory council.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Water, Energy & Environment (originally sponsored by Senators Spanel, Swecker, Poulsen, Doumit, Regala, Rockefeller, Pridemore, Haugen, Kohl-Welles, Fraser, Jacobsen, Shin and Kline).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources, Ecology & Parks: 3/24/05, 4/1/05 [DPA].

**Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill
(As Amended by House Committee)**

- Establishes a 15 member Oil Spill Monitoring and Oversight Council (Council) in the Office of the Governor to provide independent oversight, research and monitoring of the state's oil spill program.
- Directs the Council to report to the Governor and the Legislature with recommendations for the long-term funding of the council and the appropriate agency in which to locate the council.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, ECOLOGY & PARKS

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 8 members: Representatives B. Sullivan, Chair; Upthegrove, Vice Chair; Buck, Ranking Minority Member; Blake, Dickerson, Eickmeyer, Hunt and Williams.

Minority Report: Do not pass. Signed by 3 members: Representatives Kretz, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; DeBolt and Orcutt.

Staff: Jeff Olsen (786-7157).

Background:

The Legislature enacted oil spill prevention and response measures in 1991 to promote the safety of marine transportation and to protect state waters from oil spills. The Director of the Department of Ecology (DOE) has the primary authority to oversee prevention, abatement,

response, containment and cleanup efforts for oil spills in state waters. The oil spill program requires oil spill prevention plans, contingency response plans, and financial responsibility requirement for vessels and facilities that may discharge oil into navigable waters.

The Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA) was enacted largely in response to rising public concern following the Exxon Valdez oil spill. The OPA increased penalties for regulatory noncompliance, broadened the response and enforcement authorities of the federal government, and preserved state authority to establish law governing oil spill prevention and response. Section 5002 of OPA, also known as the Oil Terminal and Oil Tanker Environmental Oversight and Monitoring Act of 1990, stated that involving local citizens in oil spill planning and response could foster a long-term partnership of industry, government, and local communities in overseeing compliance with environmental concerns at crude oil terminals.

The Oil Spill Early Action Task Force (Task Force) was co-convened by the DOE and the U. S. Coast Guard as a result of the Dalco Passage oil spill on October 14, 2004, in Puget Sound. The Task Force was charged with evaluating actions to be taken during the early stages of oil spills when meteorological conditions are adverse. Members of the Task Force include representation from a wide variety of interests including the Department of Ecology, the Coast Guard, industry, ports, local governments, tribes, ports, environmental organizations, and community groups. The Task Force produced a final report in January 2005, containing 11 recommendations. One recommendation was to evaluate all appropriate citizen advisory and involvement models, and another recommendation was for the creation of an independent assessment process for regional oil spill response.

Summary of Amended Bill:

A Citizens' Oil Spill Advisory Council (Council) is created in the Office of the Governor to maintain the state's vigilance in the prevention of oil spills, while recognizing the importance of also improving preparedness and response. The Council is advisory only.

The Council is composed of 15 members appointed by the Governor, plus two invited tribal representatives. The appointed members include: three representatives of environmental organizations; one representative of commercial shellfish interests; one representative of commercial fisheries that primarily fishes in Washington waters; one representative of marine recreation; one representative of tourism interests; three representatives of county government from three specified areas; two representatives of marine trade interests; one representative of major oil facilities; one representative of public ports; and one individual who resides on a shoreline who has an interest, experience, and familiarity in the protection of water quality.

Appointments to the Council must reflect a geographical balance and the diversity of populations within the areas potentially affected by oil spills in state waters. Members serve four-year terms and are reimbursed for travel expenses related to their duties. The chair must be elected from the Council's members and serves for a term of two years. The Council must

meet at least four times a year, with specified locations for three of the meetings. To the extent possible, decisions of the Council must be by consensus.

The Council must report back to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature by December 15, 2006, regarding the long-term funding of the Council's activities and the appropriate agency in which to locate the council.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The amended bill removes changes to the legislative intent section, definition section, and the non-appropriated Oil Spill Advisory Account. The amended bill removes specific duties of the Council including the selection and hiring of professional staff. The amended bill directs the Council to report back to the Governor and the appropriate committees of the Legislature regarding the appropriate agency to locate the Council.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: (In support) Washington needs an oil spill advisory committee, with broad representation at the table, to deal with oil spill prevention. Citizens want to prevent oil spills. Washington has a significant volume of shipping traffic that is increasing each year. Previous efforts to work with industry and regulators have not been balanced discussions. The committee should be independent. Funds for the advisory committee come from dedicated funds, not the General Fund.

(With concerns) The Council should not be located within the Governor's Office, and should be located in the Department of Ecology. Funding for the advisory committee is not in the Governor's budget and is not in the oil spill early action implementation funds. The composition of the Council should include a diverse group of stakeholders.

Testimony Against: (Opposed) An additional oil spill advisory committee is unnecessary and duplicative. There are many existing committees dealing with oil spills that offer opportunities for citizen and stakeholder involvement. This bill does not address how this committee will be funded; the Alaskan committees require \$3 million to operate. The oil spill advisory committee should not be located within the Governor's Office, and should be in the Department of Ecology. The advisory committee looks like an operating entity, not an advisory only committee.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Senator Spanel, prime sponsor; Fred Felleman, Ocean Advocated; Kevin Ranker, San Juan County; Bill Dewey, Taylor Shellfish Company; and Naki Stevens, People for Puget Sound.

(Opposed) Greg Hanun, Western States Petroleum Association; Ron Shultz, Department of Ecology; Randy Ray, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association; Rick Wickman, Columbia River Steamships Operators; Gordon Baxter, International Longshore and Warehouse Union and Inland Boaters Union; and Cliff Webster, Maritime Environmental Coalition.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.